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SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION CABLE FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
IN NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

11. (U) Summary: This is an action request. In response to the large magnitude of populations displaced due to security operations by the Government of Pakistan (GOP) against militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), I, the Ambassador, have determined that a disaster exists and request emergency assistance funds to assist the GOP and the international community in dealing with relief and recovery needs of the displaced and populations at risk (See paragraph 4 below). End Summary.

12. (U) Current Situation: In October 2008, Ambassador Patterson issued an extension of the August 19, 2008 Disaster Declaration Cable for populations displaced by fighting in the tribal areas of Bajaur Agency and Mohamand Agency of FATA. Since then, Pakistan has seen a continuation and worsening of the violence, with virtually every province of the country affected directly or indirectly. Recent military operations in Lower Dir, Buner and Swat districts have resulted in a new influx of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the UN now estimates that there may soon be 1.5 million displaced in NWFP. As of May 12, 2009 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered 591,064 newly arrived IDPs from those three districts. 48,554 of them have been accommodated in new camps in Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi districts. The vast majority are living with family, friends or host families. These three districts were already host to IDPs displaced from last year's fighting in Swat district and Bajaur Agency, and the saturation point for hosting more displaced persons has been met. Not only is assistance required for the newly arrived IDPs, it is also required for the 556,000 previously registered IDPs and the host communities. While assessments by the GOP, NGOs, UN agencies, and international organizations indicate food, shelter, clean water and sanitation as priority needs for IDPs residing in camps and with host communities, additional requirements will develop as security operations continue.

13. (U) In the next few months, the increasing military operations by the GOP against militants will lead to larger population displacements. Further emergency relief assistance from the international community is necessary immediately as existing resources are insufficient to respond to the needs of the increasing number of vulnerable people. U.S. Embassy personnel from all agencies are meeting daily to monitor the situation and coordinate USG assistance. The GOP will require considerable outside help to deal with the large increase in displaced persons and has already accepted our assistance to meet immediate and longer term needs of IDPs.

14. (U) As such, I hereby declare an emergency situation of sufficient magnitude to warrant continued USG assistance in Pakistan, and that it is in the interest of the USG to continue to respond to the crisis and be prepared for further and expanded humanitarian assistance, as required. The Mission is not requesting immediate emergency assistance funds from OFDA as OFDA is already assessing needs and responding well beyond the statutory amount. However, the Mission will require substantial USG funding over the next few weeks to assist the GOP and the international community in dealing with the massive relief and recovery needs of the displaced and populations at risk.

PATTERSON